

ALL GLORIES TO ŚRĪ ŚRĪ GURU AND GAURANGA!

Nectar of Harikatha

SERMONS OF
His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti
Ballabha Tīrtha Goswāmī Mahārāja

SREE CHAITANYA GAUḌĪYA MAṬH
CHANDIGARH

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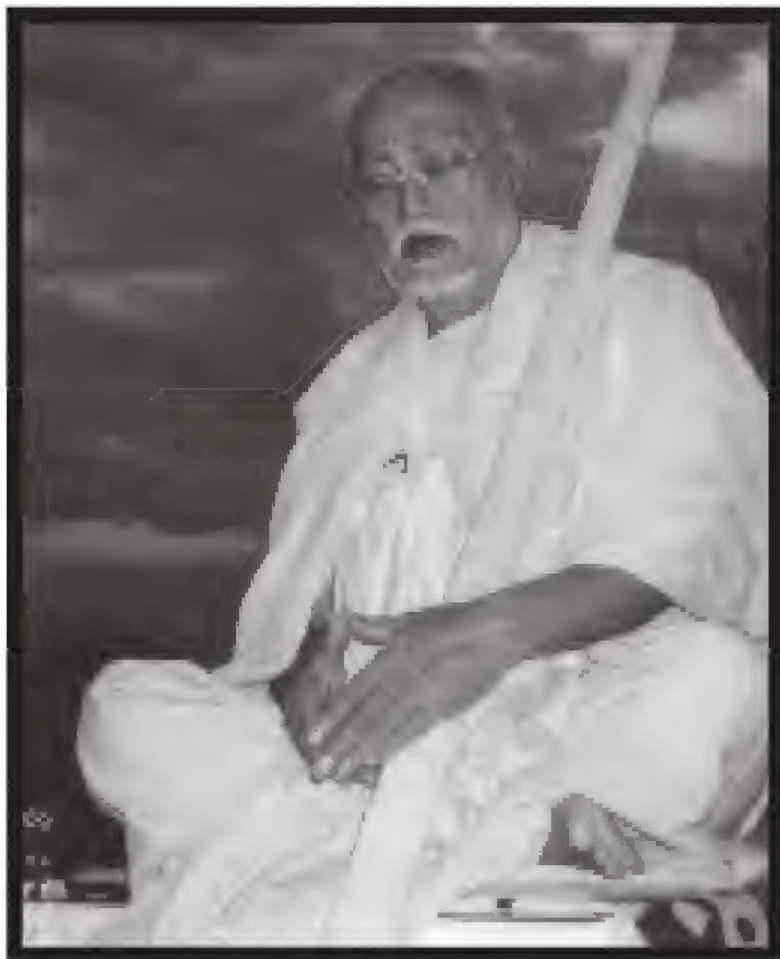
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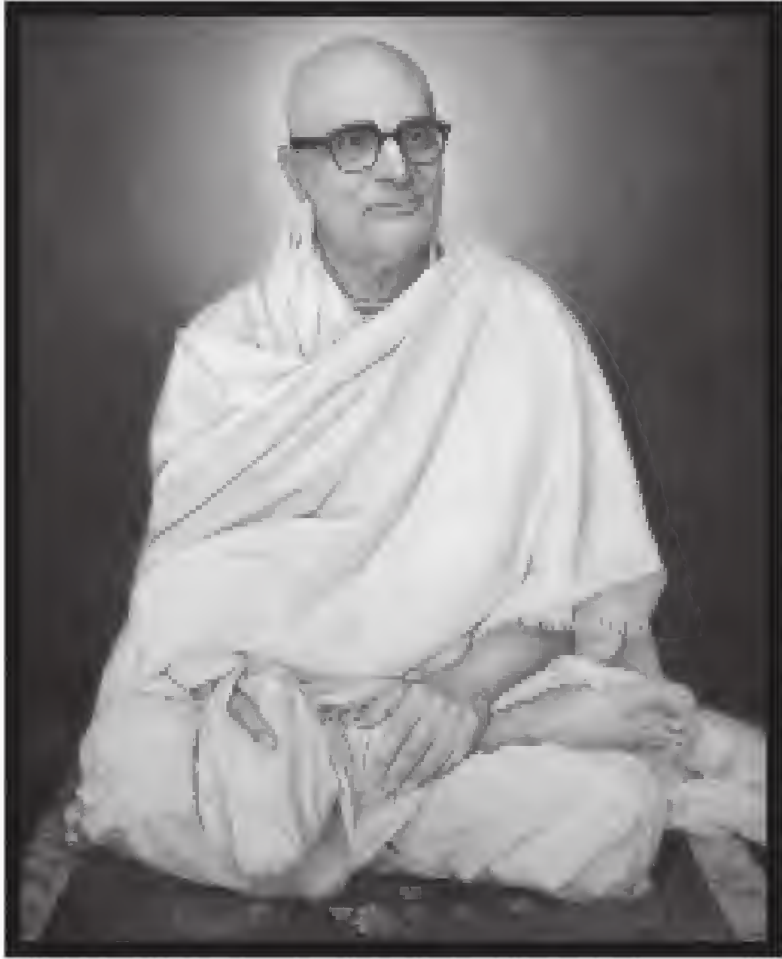
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Om Viṣṇupāda 108
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Ballabha Tīrtha Goswāmī Mahārāja



Nityalīlā-pravista Om Viṣṇupāda 108
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhav Gosvāmī Mahārāja



Nityalilā-pravista Om Viṣṇupāda 108
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

Introduction

“Narration of the glory of Hari is actual rest (Harikatha-Kirtan certainly bestows actual rest). [Rest-tranquility]. By only Harikatha all diligence and troubles will be eradicated. Any other attempt other than Harikatha even for a moment is aversion to Sri Krishna (God). Great elevated devotees and their devoted followers always narrate the glory of Hari completely – His Name, Form, Attributes, Realm and Pastimes. They have no aptitude to do anything else. Doing Hari Kirtan under all circumstances with body, mind and words certainly indicates the quality of attaining salvation even living here in the body.

To get deliverance from worldly entanglement and the threefold afflictions, there is no other way, no other way, no other way except hari-katha. Those who do not engage in hari-kirtan will be utterly ruined. Hari-katha and hari-kirtan are our only resorts. Those who have an intense eagerness to engage in them are our best friends.”

In the above saying, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Thakur Prabhupad, gives emphasis on the pertinence of hearing of Hari-Katha-Kirtan.

The present book is a collection of discourses (Hari Katha) delivered by Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj, who is the eleventh Acharya in the preceptorial line from Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the dearmost disciple of Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya Om Vishnupada

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108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj, the founder of Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math.

We would like to sincerely thank all those who have helped us, in bringing this book and other such books and magazines of the Math, into print, be it, by their financial contributions or volunteer services. May the All-Merciful Sri Sri Guru-Gauranga and Sri Sri Radha-Krishna shower Their blessings on them. We humbly pray to the readers of this work to kindly forgive any errors or omissions that may have inadvertently crept into this publication, although suggestions for improvement are always welcome.

Praying for the dust of the pure devotees's Lotus Feet,

I remain the servant of the servant of the Vaishnavas,

Bhakti Sarvasva Niskincana

Utthan Ekadasi

12 November, 2005

Religion: Boon or Bane for Country and Society?

The general opinion of people is that religion is destroying our country, society and the world. To those who think like this, I would like to ask the following question: "If religion is destroying you, your society and country, is irreligion going to save you and your country, and is immorality going to save your society?"

Nowadays, so-called civilized persons of society also boldly declare that they don't believe in God and morality etc., as if they are doing a very great work of chivalry. Is this freedom?

The following incident happened three or four years ago. I had gone to a bank for some work. There, I explained to one employee about my work when, without answering me, he lit a cigarette and began smoking. Then I approached an officer and said, "I am in a hurry. Can you please get my work done at the earliest?" He said that he didn't have time. Then I went to the bank manager, who asked the employees to do the work. I saw that nobody even got up from their chairs; they were all enjoying tea. The manager then got up and began to do the work himself. Just think, where there is no discipline or morality, how will things get done?

At present you don't follow your officer. In future, when you become an officer, your juniors will not obey you. Right now, you don't obey your parents; in future when you

become a parent, your children will not obey you. Then how would you feel? Similarly, right now you don't obey your teachers. In future when you become a teacher, your pupils will not obey you.

Therefore, we should always remember one thing: How would we feel if whatever we do to others is meted out to ourselves? The purport is, if we don't follow religiosity or accept morality, we cannot live peacefully even in society. We would then be called animals instead of human beings, because without religion, human beings are like animals (*dharmeṇa hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ*).

Many people think that now-a-days we have made much progress in science. We have made satellites and manufactured different types of bombs. Now we have started going to other planets as well. Science has brought us so much development; so now we don't need religion. My dear brother, just think using common sense. In 1942 when there was war between Japan and America, America, which is known as a civilized country, dropped a bomb over Japan which killed so many innocent people and children. Just think, if somebody kills a child we put him in jail. But who would put those persons in jail who have killed lakhs of innocent people and children? Is this civilization? Did science make such progress to carry out this kind of work?

The religion that is prevalent now-a-days in this world has been infected by politics. There is no place for violence in religion. Religion teaches non-violence; it enhances loving relations among living beings. But now-a-days, fanaticism has entered in the name of religion. With this attitude, we fight among ourselves and kill each other. We don't even stop to think if religion really teaches this. Actually, it is misuse of religion. This is not religion. Our religious scriptures don't teach us so.

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In our country, the method of propagating Vedic religion is to make people understand through logic and argument, enlightening them about the pre-eminence of religion, and thus putting them on the path of progress. Others propagate religion through allurements; still others make followers by frightening or killing people with weapons.

The only way for living beings to live together peacefully is to develop loving relationships with other living beings, and this is only possible if they know their real identity. Who is the living entity? We should know the answer to this question. As long as we are unaware of this knowledge, what to speak of mutual love for living beings, we will not even be able to understand the definition of human duty. To teach these things, Śrīla Vedavyāsa, who classified the Vedas, wrote the *Purāṇas*, *Mahābhārata* and *Gītā*, and propagated religion through these scriptures; but in spite of this, he could not attain peace. Then he went to Badarikāśrama and remembered his *guru*, Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī. Nārada Gosvāmī appeared before him and asked about his well-being. Seeing his *guru* appear before him all of a sudden, he paid obeisances and said, “You know how much I have done for the welfare of the living beings—to give them happiness—but in spite of all this, I am not feeling peace in my mind. Why is this so?”

Nārada asked, “What have you done for giving happiness to the living beings?”

Vedvyāsa said, “People of this world always want material enjoyment. They consider happiness to be in the fulfilment of their desires; therefore, I have compiled the *kāma-śāstras* by which their wishes can be fulfilled as quickly as possible. People in this world aspire for money so I have compiled the *artha-śāstras*. Apart from this, people of this world want to go to heavenly planets after leaving the body, so I have compiled the *dharma-śāstras* for them. I have

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endeavoured my best to make human beings achieve whatever they desire. Why am I still not feeling happiness?”

After hearing all of this, Nārada Gosvāmī spoke gravely, chastising Vedavyāsa as follows:

*jugupsitaṁ dharma-kṛte ’nuśāsataḥ
svabhāva-raktasya mahān vyatikramaḥ
yad-vākyato dharma itī taraḥ sthito
na manyate tasya nivāraṇaṁ janaḥ*

“You have done a very bad thing because the religion that you have established is most unfair. Living beings have a natural propensity towards *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*; this is a kind of disease. By compiling these scriptures, you have increased their disease. By increasing their disease, you have increased their distress and, in return, you are feeling distressed.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.15)

Then Vedavyāsa said, “My lord, I have facilitated liberation for the well-being of the living entities.”

Nārada Gosvāmī said, “This is all the more devastating, since by giving liberation to the living beings, you have made them forever bereft of the bliss of love of Godhead. By providing them the means to attain liberation, you have only offered them the means to escape from sorrow. You have not provided them happiness; how then can you get happiness?”

Whether theists or atheists—nobody considers the body to be the self. For example, although atheists, people of China, Russia, etc., don’t consider the body as the self, for when somebody dies, nobody punishes the person who has cremated the dead and in these countries, or in any country for that matter, the dead have no right to vote.

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Within this body there is a conscious, cognizant entity by whose presence I am “I” and by whose absence I am “not-I.” That is my actual identity, and it is *sac-cid-ānanda*, meaning I am eternally existing (*sat*), cognizant (*cit*), and blissful (*ānanda*). That entity which is always fully cognizant and blissful is called *ātmā* (soul) in the scriptures. That *ātmā* is not destroyed even when the body is destroyed, as said in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.20):

*na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin
nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṁ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*

Therefore, *ātmā* requires *ātmā*. That is why Nārada says to Vedavyāsa, “The instructions provided by you for *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*, according to the desires of the living beings, is about material, perishable objects. By perishable objects living beings will only get sorrow. Indirectly you have given only sorrow to the living beings. That is why you are getting sorrow in return.”

If *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* etc., are sources of misery, what is happiness?

The scriptures say that Happiness means personified Kṛṣṇa. As long as you don’t glorify Kṛṣṇa, Whom the *Gītā* speaks of as the cause of Absolute Brahman; Whom Brahman calls the Lord of all lords and Cause of all causes; from Whose marginal potency all living beings have emanated, you, this world and the living entities cannot become happy.

Ānanda has personality, consciousness has personality. As the atomic conscious being (*jīva*) is infinitesimally blissful, similarly, the Infinite Lord is infinitely blissful. Therefore, for atomic *jīvas* to achieve supreme bliss, they have to sing the

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glories of the infinite conscious entity, Kṛṣṇa. The scriptures say, “*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti yat prayanty abhisam-viśanti tad vijijñāśasva tad brahma.*” (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 3.1.1)

This means that the entire universe has emanated from the Lord, is maintained by the Lord and will merge back into Him. Suppose my body is a person. A large object, a hand, has come out from this body, and from the hand, one small object, a finger, has come out. Now where has the hand come out from?

From the body.
Where is the hand?
In the body.
How is the hand?
By the body.
Then what is its duty?
To live for the body.

In other words, when the hand exists for the body, it remains happy. When it does not exist for the body, it cannot be happy. For example, assume the hand is a conscious entity. If it says that it will not have any relationship with the body and not cooperate with it, and if this hand, becoming separated from my body, befriends all of you people or all the doctors of Chandigarh or of the world, can it remain happy?

No! Since this hand is by the body, in the body and through the body, its sole duty is to live for the body. Similarly, living beings have emanated from the Lord, they are maintained by the Lord and their final destination is the Lord only. Therefore, the sole duty of the living entity is to exist for the Lord—only then can he remain happy, otherwise not. In the Lord’s satisfaction lies the living beings’ satisfaction.

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Nārada said further, “You have not sung the glories of the supremely blissful Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the cause of all causes. That is why you are unhappy.”

In reply to this, Vedavyāsa said, “My lord, I have sung the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Mahābhārata*.”

Nārada said, “That glorification will not serve the purpose, since you have done for the purpose of attaining liberation. The objective of glorification of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Mahābhārata* is liberation. Whatever is the objective at the time of *bhajana*, one’s mind will go there. For example, if somebody worships the Lord for money, then at the time of worship, his mind will go towards money. Worship in this state would be called the worship of money and not of the Lord. Suppose that somebody is infected with some disease and he is worshipping the Lord to get relief from that disease. This would then be called the worship of disease and not of the Lord. Similarly, worshipping the Lord for liberation would divert the mind towards liberation and that would be called worship of liberation and not of the Lord.”

Worship of the Lord means worshipping Him for His affection, i.e., worshipping the Lord only for the Lord. Only this kind of worship will lead to the association of the Lord and association of bliss. The Lord will become happy, and through the happiness of the Lord, everybody will become happy.

Now the question arises, “How to worship the Lord?”

With the intention of answering this question, Nārada Gosvāmī recited four important *ślokas* to Vedavyāsa, which are known as the “*catuḥ śloki bhāgavata*.” Adhering to these *ślokas*, Vedavyāsa compiled the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* of 18,000 *ślokas* and achieved absolute peace.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also propagated this *Bhāgavata-dharma*. He taught that by adhering to this *Bhāgavata-dharma*, living beings would develop pure love of Godhead and would see their eternal relationship with the Lord and other living entities. Whence, the Lord says about the eternal relationship between the living entities and Himself:

*mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke
jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manaḥ-śaṣṭhānīndriyaṇi
prakṛti-sthāni karṣati*

“The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 15.7)

*jīvera ‘svarūpa’ haya—kṛṣṇera ‘nitya-dāsa’
kṛṣṇera ‘taṭasthā-śakti’ ‘bhedābheda-prakāśa’*

“It is the living entity’s constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa because he is the marginal energy of Kṛṣṇa and a manifestation simultaneously one with and different from the Lord.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 20.108)

By having pure love for the Lord, the living being will see that the Lord has infinite potencies, among which the internal, external and marginal potencies are pre-eminent. All living beings are parts of the marginal potency. Even if externally we are Hindu, Muslim or Christian, or even birds or beasts, our relationship with the Lord is eternal.

I love my family, village, state or country—this is a sectarian view. In this, there is love for one group. It is natural that when there is love for my family, village, state or country,

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there will be animosity or superiority towards other families, villages, states or countries. But when we have love for the Lord, we will have intimate love for all living entities, whether they be of any country, caste or universe.

Living beings come into this world after forgetting God, and after coming into this world, innumerable desires appear in their hearts. After desires appear in the heart, the tendency for enjoyment arises. From here, clashes begin. I endeavour to satisfy my senses, and innumerable souls like me, who have also come into this world in forgetfulness of the Lord, also endeavour to satisfy their senses, and everyone fights among themselves like dogs.

But if the living beings who have turned away from God come to know the real purport of religion, i.e., if we understand that we are *ātmā*, then our only necessity will be Paramātmā, the Supreme Lord. We will not have any demand for material objects and there will never be any fighting among ourselves. Therefore, religion is a boon to country and society, not a curse.

Sanātana-Dharma

The word “Hindu” is not found anywhere in the Vedic scriptures. Medieval invaders to India pronounced Sindhu as Hindu. They referred to the people living beyond the Sindhu (Indus) as Hindus. Gradually the term “Hindu” became acceptable even to the Indians themselves as a general designation for their spiritual tradition. The proper term is *Sanātana Dharma*.

Due to the lack of proper knowledge about the subject matter of ‘*Sanātana Dharma*’, now-a-days *asanātana dharma* is being spread as *sanātana dharma*. People, lacking the knowledge of the real meaning of *sanātana dharma*, are considering *sanātana dharma* as the religion of Hindus only; which is a very limited conception. What is the real meaning of *sanātana dharma*?

Following is an excerpt from a lecture by the president-acharya of Sree Caitanya Gaudiya Math, Sree Śrīmad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj on “What is *Sanātana Dharma*?”.

“The Sanskrit word *Dharma* is not same as religion. Both these words do not have same meaning. Since we do not find any other word in English to express the true meaning of *Dharma*, we use the word religion which is closest. The dictionary meaning of religion is: “A system of faith, especially to a personal God entitled to obedience.”

Śrīla Sacidananda Bhaktivinod Thakur, while speaking in relation to the word *dharma*, mentions that the meaning of *dharma* is ‘nature’. A person’s nature is his *dharma*. *Dharma* can be divided into two types. They are *naimittika dharma*

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(temporary dharma) and *nitya dharma* (eternal dharma). This can be illustrated by this example. The nature of water is liquidity. However, subjected to excessive cold it becomes ice. If the cold is removed it again becomes water. Therefore ice form will be referred as the *naimittika dharma* of water while liquidity is its eternal dharma.

To understand our *dharma* (eternal nature), first of all we should know—who are we? Normally we will think of us to be this body and refer to its designation as ourselves. We understand this body to be the person. On the contrary, in our speech we use phrases like: “my body”, “my mind”, “and my intelligence”. Nobody says ‘I body, I mind’. This tells that ‘I’, the person, is different from the body. From an external perspective, nobody identifies the body as the person. Whether a country is theistic or atheistic, everywhere the body is considered as a person as long as there is a conscious principle present in it. On losing that conscious principle, nobody calls the dead body a person. Burning or burying a dead body does not result in any punishment! Nowhere a dead body has the right to vote in elections!

As long as a body has the conscious principle present in it, it is identified as a person. By the existence of that principle, ‘I’ remains and by the absence of that principle, ‘I’ does not remain. That conscious principle, referred to as *atma* or *īva* or Soul in the scriptures, is our real self.

Now let’s think about the real position of the living entities (*jīvas*). Where from did they come? What is their dharma? Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā is accepted and adored all over the world. Lord Śrī Krishna mentions in the Bhagavad-Gītā that living entities are parts of His energy/potency. However, at another place in Bhagavad-Gītā, He says that they are His own parts. On the basis of the second statement, some say that the *jīva* is a part of Bhagavān, and therefore he is also Bhagavān.

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However, this is not correct. The jīvas are not mentioned as Bhagavān here. Both statements of Krishna in the Gītā should be considered. Lord Krishna says,

*apareyam itas tv anyām
prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīva-bhūtām mahā-bāho
yayedam dhāryate jagat*

(O mighty-armed Arjuna! There is another, superior energy of Mine, which comprises the living entities). According to Gītā, living entities are not part of the Supreme Lord Himself, but a part of His energy. The atomic soul is energy of the eternally existing, eternally blissful and eternally knowledgeable Supreme Lord

A part of the Lord is non-different from the Lord, because every part of the infinite is infinite. The direct part of the Lord is called svamsa. All incarnations are Lord Krishna's svamsa. Every part of the infinite is infinite, but a part of the energy of the infinite cannot be infinite. For example, a part of sun will be non-different from the sun, but the rays of light cannot be considered to be sun itself. Even all the light rays collected together cannot be called sun. Similarly living entity (jīva) is part of Lord's energy, not of the Lord Himself. The jnanis explain 'tattvamasi' as 'You are that'. However vaisnava teachers refute it and explain it as 'you are His', or 'you are His servant'.

If the sun's light is coming to my room through the window, then I cannot say that the sun has come to my room. The Sun is 1,400,000 times the size of the whole earth, so how can it come into my room? It is the light rays of the sun, as a part of the sun's energy that has come. Even all the light rays collected together cannot make the sun as such. The sun gives light, but the light does not become the sun. Similarly, jīva is

energy of the Supreme Lord and can never become God.

The Lord has infinite potencies or energies. The Gītā talks about two of those: the ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ potencies. Living entities (jīvas) are formed from the superior energy, while material and subtle bodies are composed from the inferior energy. Śrī Chaitanya Mahaprabhu made it clear that a jīva is a part of the Lord’s marginal potency. The jīva comes from Bhagavān, is in Bhagavān, and is therefore for Bhagavān. If we consider the jīva to be Bhagavān, then we will be misunderstanding Bhagavān. Just like a finger is a small part of the body, the jīva is also a small part of the Lord’s potency - not the complete Lord. Some people also say that we were God earlier, but became jīva by the influence of maya, yet we will become God again by chanting ‘*soham soham!*’. This is completely wrong. This is not the scriptural injunction. God can never become jīva, because the Absolute is always Absolute.

The Lord is eternal and His potencies are eternal. The jīva, being a part of the Lord’s potency, therefore, is eternal. Their relationship is eternal and their dharma is also eternal. This is called eternal dharma or ‘Sanātana Dharma’. The meaning of Sanātana is: “whatever existed in the past, is existing now and will always exist in the future.”

However dharma of the body is not sanātana, because the body is destructible. The subtle body made of mind, intelligence and ego, is also not eternal. The dharma of a destructible thing cannot be called ‘Sanātana Dharma’. This is called ‘*Naimittik Dharma*’.

The soul is superior to mind and body and is not restricted by any social, national or geographical barriers. Therefore Sanātana dharma does not only apply to India, but it is the dharma for all the living entities, who are spread in innumerable universes.

The essence is that soul is eternal, whereas the material body is destructible. Therefore, all body related dharmas are destructible and only the soul's dharma is eternal. Living entities are part and parcel of the Lord's potency. The potency is always under the control of the owner of the potency and serves that owner. Similarly the service of the Lord is the highest duty of the living entity. This dharma of soul is known as Bhagavat dharma, Sanātana dharma or Vaishnava Dharma. This is the natural dharma of living entities.

We should understand very well that performing rituals alone does not constitute dharma. *Upāsana* (worship) is the right method. The mind will be purified by the remembrance of the Supreme Lord (Bhagavān). Purenness of mind will result in love for the Supreme Lord, and love for the Supreme Lord will cause the development of love for all the living beings related to Him. In this process, there will not be any violence towards anybody. Therefore love for the Supreme Lord is the highest dharma.

The Search for Happiness

Every living being has only one objective: to remove suffering and attain happiness. Everyone is trying in their own way. Are they getting relieved of suffering or getting happiness?

In this regard, there is an illustration narrated in Śrīmad Bhagawatam. When Lord Nṛsimhadeva appeared, He killed Hiranyakaśipu and ordered his son Prahlad to sit on throne. By the order of Lord Nṛsimhadeva, Prahlad Maharaj sat on the throne and started looking after the affairs of the kingdom. He used to support his subjects in distress and happiness by meeting them personally. Hence his subjects were happy. One day Prahlad Maharaj was going along with his ministers to get the news of his subjects. He saw from a distance a dark man lying on the sand, wearing just a loincloth.

Prahlad Maharaj asked his ministers to find out the reason for that. Ministers were not enthused by Maharaj's order, thinking that he might be a mad person and hence not worth attention. Then Prahlad Maharaj himself went to that person. He paid obeisances by lying on the sand and placed that man's feet on his head. Seeing all this ministers were astonished thinking why their king is behaving in this manner with a mad man.

Then Prahlad Maharaj politely asked that person – “Why are you lying on this hot sand like this? Your body is strong. You can earn money by working and live comfortably by making a beautiful hut and serve tens of people of society. Look, how many people are walking in front of you. All have

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same objective - to remove suffering and attain happiness. All are working day and night for happiness. You also work for your happiness.”

That person laughed and replied, “You say that all people are working day and night for happiness and you are also asking me to work day and night. I see that everybody is working day and night hoping for happiness but nobody is getting peace. Nobody is getting happiness; rather they are getting more suffering, and then is it intelligent to work day and night for sorrow? This is not an act of intelligence and hence I am lying on sand unbothered.”

To labour for happiness is intelligent but it is foolish to work for sufferings. We think that getting money will make us happy, but go and ask wealthy people if they are happy?

Thomson Bata (owner of Bata Shoe company), whose sun like money never set, who was the second richest person of the world during his time, committed suicide by jumping from the 14th floor of his mansion in Paris. Does anyone commit suicide in happiness? One commits suicide when he is not able to tolerate grief.

Henry Ford had only one son. When he was thirty years old, he got infected by a severe disease which became the cause of his death. Did the billions of money of his father come of any use to him? Could that richest person of the world, stop his son from dying, on the might of his money?

Dr. Rādhā Kṛṣṇan, the then President of India, has written an article in which he wrote that maximum number of persons committing suicide is in America and that too amongst the rich families. We were surprised by hearing this. We used to think that our country is poor; perhaps people commit suicide here only.

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In America, even the cleaners have cars and two telephones in their houses. Then what to speak of the standard of rich people over there! Just imagine! But the maximum number of persons committing suicide and insane are there only and that too among rich.

We think that having money would bring happiness. You heard previous examples. Did they become happy?

No.

Somebody may think that having a beautiful spouse would make him happy. Ask those persons who have beautiful spouse if they are happy. One with beautiful spouse may think that having a son would make them happy. They got a son also, but they think having a daughter would make them happy. They also got a daughter. Now they think that by educating them and making them worldly wise would make them happy. Then they think that getting a daughter-in-law would make them happy. Then also they don't get happiness and they think seeing the grandchild's face would make them happy. "I shall get this. I shall get that." Thinking like this the time comes when they have to leave body. This golden life slips from the hands of these foolish people but they will not get happiness.

When the hot sun shines over the desert, the sand glitters and from a distance it gives an illusory appearance of the presence of water. At that time, the foolish deer runs towards the radiating sand. With the scorching sun above and hot sand underneath, the foolish deer, out of thirst, relinquishes its life running, astray. The necessity of deer is water but there is no water in the direction he is running. There is appearance of water, delusion of water. Similarly, the direction in which foolish people are running in search of happiness and attainment of bliss, happiness is not there. There is a shadow, a delusion of happiness. This is called maya – 'ma' means not

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and 'ya' means that.

The object which is not like that, but is appearing so is called *maya*. Just like, this world is not going to exist forever, but it appears to ignorant as if eternal; this world is nescience but it appears to ignorant as if knowledgeable. This world is full of sufferings but appears to ignorant as if this world is full of bliss. This is called *maya* and we are running after this *maya* like a mad man.

When I first came to Chandigarh, then I saw a young boy riding on a mare (female horse) wearing turban on his head. Behind him many people, well dressed and decorated, were walking. Everyone was giving great respect to him. Then I thought that I am celibate since childhood and never got to sit on a mare and marry. This young man is now sitting on a mare, tomorrow he would drive with his wife in a car, would go to movie, picnic and enjoy. We remain here just like that. But what happened - the young man started coming to temple after some time. One day when he met me, he touched my feet and started saying, "O great soul! You people are very happy for not having come in the clutches of this material world. I am repenting after getting married.

This world is full of miseries from top to bottom. When we are in the womb of mother, our legs are upwards and head is down. Our soft skin is bitten by insects in the womb and we become unconscious again and again. On one side this misery, then misery at the time of birth and after that till we are alive, *ādhyātmika* (bodily or mental), *ādhibhautika* (caused by other living creatures), and *ādhidāivika* (caused by nature) afflictions will give us miseries.

Till when?

Till the time we are not dead and even at the time of death there is distress. This is the material disease, *bhava-vyādhī*. For getting medicine of this disease we have to approach doctor – *sadhu*, *guru*. If we take medicines and proper diet as suggested by him, we certainly will get rid of the above diseases. But the problem is that to which *guru* we should

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surrender; there are many gurus. Lord Shiva says to Parvati –

*guravo bahavaḥ santi śiṣya-vittāpahārakāḥ
durlabhaḥ sad-gurur devī śiṣya-santāpahārakāḥ*

“One can find many gurus who can take away the wealth of the disciples, but there are few who can remove miseries of the disciples.” Hence the original spiritual master, Lord Nandanandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is transcendental spiritual master. He assumed the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Who serves Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa incomparably, and appeared in this kaliyuga around 500 years back as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

The Cause of all causes, the Original Spiritual Master and the Transcendental *Acharya* explains the cause of suffering of living beings, “Jivas are part of Marginal Potency of Lord and hence are His eternal servants in their real identity. But in present state they have forgotten their Lord and are hence suffering the miseries afflicted due to the material disease.”

*kṛṣṇa bhuli sei jīva-anādi-bhahirmukha
ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra duḥkha*

Any endeavor to remove these miseries other than removing this major offence of forgetfulness of Lord would be null and void because the cause of misery is forgetfulness of Lord. If you want happiness, then remember Lord, take support of Him, call Him, and chant His name, because He is the only object of bliss. One gets coolness in proximity of ice and gets warmth in proximity of fire; it cannot happen that one gets heat in proximity of ice and coolness in proximity of fire. It means that one can find a particular thing only from its source. Hence that divine unusual bliss is in Lord Himself and can be found in Him only.

Apart from this one important thing is - in this age meditation will not do, fire sacrifices will not do, deity worship

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will not do. For the persons who are devastated by Kaliyuga, the only ultimate way to get relieved from the disease of material existence is Harinam Sankirtan, only Harinam Sankirtan. Apart from this there is no other way - certainly no other way, certainly no other way.

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatiḥ anyathā*

The Process of knowing Lord

There are four methods of acquiring knowledge as mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

1. *Pratyakṣa* — direct perception
2. *Anumāna* — inference
3. *Aitiḥya* — tradition, historical understanding
4. *Śabda* — spiritual sound, particularly
vedic/scriptural

The first method of attaining knowledge is through direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), the knowledge one attains by the experience through material senses. For example, we see using eyes, we hear through ears, we smell through nose, we experience the sense of touch through skin and taste using tongue.

The second method of acquiring knowledge is by inference (*anumāna*) - many things are not visible directly but can be established through inference. For example, by seeing the smoke drifting from a distant mountain one can infer the existence of fire in the mountains, for we know from our previous experience that there cannot be smoke without the existence of fire.

The third method of acquiring knowledge is through tradition (*aitiḥya*). We attain knowledge through history since the past happenings are documented in history. The acquisition of knowledge through this process is called *aitiḥya* (tradition).

Apart from all these, final way of acquiring knowledge is *śabda* (spiritual sound). Even if I have not seen an object or

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incident, but I have heard about that object or incident from an experienced person, I became cognizant after hearing from that person. This process of acquiring knowledge is called śabda (spiritual sound). Just like teacher imparts knowledge through sound and students receive it through sound. Teachers give knowledge through mouth and students receive it through ears but the medium is sound. These are the four principal methods of obtaining knowledge about any object.

In these four evidences, the ten methods of obtaining knowledge in nyāya śāstra are summarized. Through logic these 4 evidences can be summarized further. Now one cannot have inference without having prior direct experience, it can be said that inference is within direct perception. On the other hand, knowledge of history comes through the medium of sound. Hence *aitihya* evidence is contained within *sabda* evidence. Hence only two methods remain for obtaining knowledge about any object – direct perception and sound.

It is to be noted that four kinds of defects* (confusion, inadvertence, cheating and imperfection of senses) exist in the process of obtaining knowledge through direct perception (*pratskya pramāṇa*) by conditioned living beings, because of which they cannot obtain perfect knowledge. The essence is that if there is defect in the process of acquiring knowledge then how can one obtain the perfect knowledge by accepting such process. In order to obtain the real and perfect knowledge, the process should also be perfect.. Hence only one method of obtaining knowledge remains - that is śabda (sound). Only by śabda pramāṇa, one can have real knowledge.

Now the question arises, which śabda? Is it of conditioned living beings? No. the sound of realized souls (which is free from four kinds of defects). Their teachings alone can impart us the knowledge of spiritual world (Lord's Abode) or by following the teachings of Lord Himself we can

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attain the perfect knowledge. This is called śabda pramāṇa. Our previous acharya Śrīla Bhaktivinode Thakur has written “*āmṇāya prahāṇa tattvam*” meaning the knowledge descending from spiritual lineage is the only method for experiencing the real object. Lord has imparted His Absolute knowledge first to Brahmā, who was born from His lotus navel.

Lord is infinite and complete. Nobody can know about Lord until He mercifully gives the knowledge to know Him. Lord is called Absolute (means no one is equal to or greater than Him). There is no other way to know Him except by His mercy.

In 1933, when Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupad desired to make a temple in Mumbai, then our Gurudeva (Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj) and most revered Śrīla Bhakti Rakshak Śrīdhārdev Goswami Maharaj headed to Mumbai along with some devotees. They were staying in a rented house in Mumbai. When the head of Theosophical Society came to know about the arrival of saints from Gaudiya Math, he invited them to give a lecture in Theosophical Society, which they accepted.

In his address, Śrīdhār Dev Goswami Maharaj said that as the owner of wealth is called wealthy, likewise, owner of shakti (potency) is called shaktiman or Bhagavān. It is to be noted that no particular energy has been specified, meaning, Bhagavan is possessor of all the energies. Essence is that Lord is Omnipotent, Infinite and Complete – the one which is called Absolute by Western philosophers; Whom nobody can know nor can attain. If a finite living being says that he has known Lord, then infinite Lord becomes finite. That is why, Infinite is unknown. This is the principle which Śrīdhār Dev Goswami Maharaj established in his discourse. At the end of lecture, the head of society met Śrīdhār Dev Goswami Maharaj and said, “Swamiji your discourse was grave but I have a question

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in my mind.”

“What is the question”, Śrīdhar Maharaj asked in sweet words.

“Swamiji, you said that nobody can know Lord or obtain Him, then why have you people renounced this world and leading the principles of sacrifice and renunciation. I think that if Lord cannot be obtained, then to undergo renunciation, to follow principles of renunciation is all waste.”

Then Śrīdhar Maharaj said, “Since Lord is Ominpotent, Infinite and Complete, we can know Him and obtain Him.”

Hearing these words of revered Maharaj, the head was astonished and started saying, “You are making contradicting statements. Either you are a barrister or a lawyer. It is not proper to call you saint in my view because only lawyers can make truth appear as false and false appear as truth. Initially you said that Lord is Infinite and Complete, hence nobody can know Him or obtain Him but now you are saying that since Lord is Infinite, Complete and Omnipotent, He can be obtained and known.

After hearing the head of the society Śrīdhar Maharaj replied smilingly, “If we obtain the Infinite, Omnipotent and Complete Lord by our power and endeavor then the infiniteness of the Infinite does not remain, the completeness of the Complete does not remain. But if the Infinite and Omnipotent does not have power to let Himself known, then also we cannot call Him Infinite or Omnipotent because He does not have the power to make Himself known.

So the principle is that Infinite, Complete and Omnipotent Lord cannot be known by our own endeavor and power but He can let us know Himself by His mercy. This does

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not limit the infiniteness of the Infinite, completeness of the Complete and omnipotence of the Omnipotent.

For example the *asammordhva** tattva, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa made Himself known to Brahma through sound. The initiated (śrautiya) Brahma perfected this knowledge (Śrī Gāyatrī jñāña) through practice. And after experiencing it himself he imparted this knowledge to Nārada and his son, Svayambhū Manu. Svayambhū Manu imparted that knowledge to seven brahmarṣis. In another lineage, the same knowledge was imparted to Vedavyāsa by Nārada. Vedavyāsa gave the same to Mādhavācārya and in the spiritual lineage, the same knowledge came down to our spiritual master, Nityalila Pravista Om Vishnupad 108 Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj. This is the path to acquire knowledge and the process to know Lord through guru-parampara (spiritual lineage) – this knowledge of Vedas descends from above and hence they are non-different from Supreme Lord. The śabda (sound) that is different from Lord is not capable of making Him known. That is why Vedas are called direct Narayana Himself (vedaḥ narayan saksat).

Śrīmad-Bhagavad-gītā is non-different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa since it has been sung from the Lotus-Lips of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Hence by taking shelter of Gita, one can experience Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmad Bhagawata is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. Its twelve cantos are compared to twelve limbs of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By taking shelter of Śrīmad Bhagawata one can attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, to know about the embodiment of Transcendental Divine Love, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, one has to relish Śrī Chaitanya Bhagawata (written by Śrīla Vṛndavan Das Thakur, who is an incarnation of Śrīla Vedavyāsa) and Śrī Chaitanya Charitamṛta (illuminated by the inspiration of Vṛndavan-vihari Śrī Madan Mohan) in the company of devotees.

Lord is the original spiritual master and Vedic scriptures are the original evidence. Hence we have to take

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shelter of Lord and His transcendental sound – Vedic scriptures. Only by the mercy of Lord and Vedic scriptures can we know Him, understand Him and attain Him.

*asammordhva**- no one equal to Him or greater than Him.

The Only Way for World Peace

(In the 1980s, while in Jalandhar, some people informed Śrīla Gurudeva about terrorist disturbances in Punjab and asked how they can be relieved of these clashes and attain peace. Śrīla Gurudeva answered this question in his evening discourse.)

This problem is not only of Punjab, but this is problem of the entire world. I will give you an example for comprehension. Listen carefully. At the birth place of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad, who has propagated the instructions of Śrī Chaitanya Mahaprabhu through out the world by establishing Śrī Chaitanya Math and Gaudiya Mission, our Most Revered spiritual master, Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj, has established Śrī Chaitanya Gaudiya Math. Some years back, *sankirtan* hall was inaugurated at that place, in which Governor of Orissa, Śrīyut Vishvambharnath Pandey, was present as chairman. Governor, Śrī Pandey, told that during his world tour, when he reached Stockholm city of Sweden he was astonished by the opulence of the city. That city has the highest per capita income and expenditure. Every person of that place is wealthy. Nobody's monthly income is less than 10,000 -15,000. He thought, "I used to think about bringing India to that level to make it prosperous. There are no economic problems - nursing of children, their education, even their medical treatment is taken care of by the government. Apart from this there is no adulteration either in medicines or in edibles." I was astonished to see all this. I have just heard of heaven but I felt that I have seen the heaven directly. I became very happy. I said to the residents of

Stockholm in admiration that their country is very prosperous and is on the paths of progress on all accounts.

When he said like that, a native of Stockholm said to him, “You have eulogized us too much by seeing our external opulence. Perhaps you have come here for the first time. But the real truth is that nobody is as unhappy as us in this world. It is true that everyone here is wealthy, there is no adulteration in edibles. Education for children, their medical treatment as well as employment is taken care of by the government. But the number of divorces happening here is unmatched in the whole of world. We are quite ahead in suicides committed due to mental agonies and the number of infractions happening between young men and women is also highest. Hearing all this Pandeyji’s mind got bewildered and he started thinking, “I wished to bring my country to this level to make it prosperous... but?” He said, “When I reached America, I saw that almost all people above 35 years need to take sleeping pills and with people with age less than 35, there are few who take sleeping pills.”

Beware! We think that we will become happy by having money. If just by getting money one would become happy then the Americans or Swedes should have been happy. Like this we think that having knowledge will make us happy. But in this prison like world, even the knowledgeable are unhappy, fools are also not happy, unmarried are not happy and married are not happy.

One is pathological treatment and another is symptomatic treatment. These english medicines offer symptomatic treatment - if we treat one disease and upon medication, second symptom arises and treating that, third symptom arises and so on. In this process at some stage you may get into some serious disease. But in our *ayurveda* there is pathological treatment. The root cause of disease is analyzed

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in this. If the root cause of the disease is removed then there is no further disease.

Now try to find analogy of these things in your life. We are getting distress at every step in our whole life, starting from mother's womb to death. What is the reason of all these sufferings? If we get to know the cause of these sufferings, then we can also get rid of this disease of distress forever by removing its root cause.

In this regard Śrī Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said, making his devotee associate Śrīla Sanatana Goswami as medium, "See, in your real identity you are eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, means, you are not of this world. You are a part of the marginal potency of Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Lord is your only eternal master. Because Lord is eternal and you have forgotten your eternal master, your eternal father, *maya* has put you in this prison house for punishment and is giving lots of sufferings." This is the cause of our sufferings. Uproot this root cause (forgetfulness of Lord) - meaning - remember Lord, surrender to Him, and then you will get happiness instead of suffering. You will get absolute peace.

As Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks to Arjuna showing him the path of absolute peace.

*tam eva śaraṇaṁ gaccha
sarva-bhāvena bhārata
tat-prasādāt parāṁ śāntiṁ
sthānaṁ prāpsyasi śāśvatam
Srimad Bhagavad Gita 18.62*

Now suppose there is a man. If someone surrenders to him he tries his utmost to protect him. Similarly, if we surrender to the Lotus Feet of Lord, our eternal master and say "O Lord! I am yours, Will He not protect us? Wouldn't He release us from sufferings?"

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We don't surrender to Lord and forget Him. That is why the external potency of Lord punishes us and will continue to punish us. Beware! This world is not a place for happiness. If we think we can be happy in this world, it is impossible.

Yes, there can be standards of sorrow, anxiety. Just like, there is less anxiety in sattva-guṇa (mode of goodness), more anxiety in rajo-guṇa (mode of passion), even more in tamoguṇa (mode of ignorance) and more than that in extreme tamoguṇa (where indiscipline of enjoyment is more), the way it is happening now-a-days.

Hence not just surrendering but surrendering completely to Lord under all circumstances is essential. When we will completely surrender to Lord's Lotus Feet, at that very instance our sufferings, anxiety and agonies would go away as hundred years of darkness gets removed as soon as a bulb is lighted.

"We won't take shelter of Lord's lotus feet, we will keep away from Him and we remain un-surrendered to Him but would establish peace in this world by some novel process" - a desire like this will only ultimately result in despondency. Never has it happened and never will it be.

Hari-bhajan in Married Life

(Translated from a Hindi lecture delivered in Bhatinda, Punjab in Nov. 1986.)

“What is the duty of grhasthas like us? How should we perform Hari-bhajan?” Many married persons ask questions about this subject. They say that they like to do bhajan and go to spiritual festivals but don’t get time from their worldly responsibilities. They also say that sadhus don’t have anything to do other than Hari-bhajan but grhasthas have so many responsibilities to fulfill. What should they do in such a state?

Addressing such grhasthas, Śrīla Guru Maharaja said, “Let’s assume you have many things to do and are always engaged in some or the other work. Don’t you take some time off to eat while engaged in work? You eat in the morning, you take lunch, and then you take dinner. Some people even eat in the evening. We have so many things to do and yet we find time to eat 3 or 4 times a day. Why? Because we have understood the importance of eating. We know that if we don’t eat, our bodies will become weak. However, we have not understood the importance of Hari-bhajan. That is why we are not able to find time for it.”

Necessity is the mother of invention. When we understand the importance of Hari-bhajan, we will also find some time for it. At our maths in Calcutta and other cities, sat-sanga (scriptural discourse) is a daily activity. Some people come daily for sat-sanga but if they are unable to come for

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some reason like rain, etc. they always hanker for sat-sanga and look forward to when they will be able to go to the math and hear the hari-katha. Why does this happen? Because their soul has been awakened. When their soul does not get its food, they feel pain and emptiness. Therefore they somehow try to manage and get more and more time for sat-sanga.

One can easily find some time for bhajan, even in the midst of innumerable responsibilities. To understand this point, let us take the example of Ambarisa Maharaja from Śrīmad-Bhagavatam. How many responsibilities might we have? At the most 2 or 3 big shops, a big piece of land, or a farm? However, Śrīla Sukadeva Goswami related to Pariksit Maharaja the story of Maharaja Ambarisa who was the emperor of the whole world. Now you can imagine how many responsibilities he might have had. Yet, he performed bhajan in such a manner that the curse of Durvasa Rsi, which never goes in vain, was not even able to touch him.

*nabhagad ambariso 'bhun
maha-bhagavatah krti
nasprsad brahma-sapo 'pi
yam na pratihatah kvacit*

“From Nabhaga, Maharaja Ambarisa took birth. Maharaja Ambarisa was an exalted devotee, celebrated for his great merits. Although he was cursed by an infallible brahmana, the curse could not touch him.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.13)

Maharaja Pariksit was surprised to hear this and he become interested in hearing more about the character of such an amazing devotee of the lord. Sukadeva Goswami continued:

*Śrī-suka uvaca
ambariso maha-bhagah
sapta-dvipavatim mahim*

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avyayam ca Śrīyam labdhva
vibhavam catulam bhuvi

mene 'tidurlabham pumsam
sarvam tat svapna-samstutam
vidvan vibhava-nirvanam
tamo visati yat puman

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.14.15-16)

One who possesses wealth is considered to be fortunate. In this respect, Ambarisa Maharaja was very, very fortunate. He had inexhaustible, unlimited opulence and prosperity. Ordinary people cannot even conceive of his wealth. In spite of being such a great emperor, he considered all of his wealth to be very insignificant and temporary like a dream.

On the footpaths of Calcutta, we can see many beggars that are born and die there while begging. Think of a beggar who is hungry and sleeping on an old and dirty sheet. He is dreaming that he has become a big minister or a king. Everybody is honoring him. There are beautiful arrangements of various kinds of foodstuff and drinks for his satisfaction. There are arrangements of air-conditioned rooms for his residence. Whenever he wants to travel, he goes by airplane and various other luxurious vehicles. While seeing such a beautiful dream, he wakes up and sees that he is still sleeping on the footpath over a torn sheet. So his dream of being a king seems completely false. In the same way, although Maharaja Ambarisa possessed immense wealth, he considered it all to be false and temporary. He did not have even a tinge of attachment for his possessions. He knew very well that his wealth could be destroyed while he was alive or he would have to leave it behind. Separation was inevitable. He also knew that attachment to temporary material wealth causes one to fall down into ignorance, hellish conditions or miseries. This

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is the secret. To live in the world while not belonging to it. Sadhus also live in this world but they never want to enjoy it. Sadhus consider themselves, this world, and all the belongings of this world to be the objects of enjoyment for the Supreme Lord.

That is the reason why they never get entangled in this material world. It is known as *sudarsan*. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* (9.24), the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

aham hi sarva yajnanambhokta ca prabhur eva ca

“I am the enjoyer of all kind of sacrifices. I am the doer. Nobody else is the enjoyer or doer.” When we come under the *maya* potency of the Supreme Lord, we consider ourselves to be the doer or enjoyer. Maharaja Ambarisa, in spite of being the sole emperor of the world, never got the false pride of being the owner of the earth.

For example, when we go on pilgrimage, we pay 4000 rupees to the railway company to book a passenger bogie. For one month, we travel in that bogie to all the holy places. During our pilgrimage we pay full attention to the cleanliness, electricity, and water supply in the bogie. If anything goes wrong, we go to the station office and get it fixed. After one month, we reach Bhatinda (Punjab) and get down from the train so fast it’s like there is a race going on. After leaving the bogie we never look back at it. We spent so many days in it. We took care of its cleanliness, electricity, water, etc. and spent 4000 rupees on it. However, we have not even a slight attachment for that bogie. What is the reason for this?

The reason is knowledge.

The knowledge that this bogie is not ours. It belongs to the railway company. It was only meant for our pilgrimage. If we get a similar kind of realization about this material world,

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we will think that all our possessions, wife, son, family, house and our very body belong to the Supreme Lord. Always think that we have got it for a fixed period of time as per the will of the Supreme Lord, and after finishing that period, it will go away by the will of the Supreme Lord. Then we will not keep attachment for this temporary world which is full of miseries. Sometimes, travellers come to a hotel or a lodge, stay for some time, and then go on to their destinations. Similarly, we should not have attachment for this world while living in this world. However, these are all not just talking matters—we should realize them.

Just think!

Maharaja Ambarisa did not have even the least bit of attachment for such a great kingdom and immense wealth. And here we are not able to leave our attachment for a house or a cottage. If we lose a ten dollar bill we will think about it continuously. What is the reason? How had Maharaja Ambarisa got such a consciousness? In reply, Śrīmad-Bhagavatam says:

*vasudeve bhagavati
tad-bhaktesu ca sadhusu
prapto bhavam param visvam
yenedam lostravat smrtam
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.17)*

Maharaja Ambarisa had bhava (strong attachment with feelings: the first stage of development of love of God) in the eternal blissful form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva, and in the saintly persons who are the Lord's devotees. That is why the whole universe and all its wealth were valueless for him. Therefore, unless we get a higher taste, we will not be able to forgo our attachments to this world. For example, if you put a little sugar or a rasagulla in the mouth of a child who has eaten dirt, he will spit out all the dirt from his

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mouth—something he would not do even after getting scolded for it. He will then become greedy to eat the rasagulla. Similarly, by being attached to the Supreme Lord and His devotees, all our attachments to this world will come to an end. With attachment to the Supreme Lord, all our greed, ignorance, miseries, and fear of hell will end and we will get the highest taste for the Supreme Lord.

Benefit of Dhama Parikrama

(Circumambulation of the Holy Place)

Why don't we get the benefit of Dhāma-parikramā and harināma?

Once every three years, Śrī Chaitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha organises Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā of 84 krośas. (1 krośa ~ 3 km) It runs for the whole month of Kārttika. During the last days of the Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā in 1987, in Gokula-Mahāvana, our most revered Śrīla Bhakti Ballabh Tīrtha Gosvāmī Mahārāja raised a question to himself in order to instruct us: “As we increase our endeavour for devotion, our attachment to this world increases rather than our attachment to the Supreme Lord. Why is this so?”

Here follows the divine & sublime words of Guru Mahārāja to purify our heart and to please the devotees who have affection for Śrī Guru, Gaurāṅga & Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

You have all performed Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā for so many days. You have heard the glories of parikramā. By performing parikramā, our love and attachment to the Supreme Lord increases and we lose interest in any matter not related to the Supreme Lord. We have had the opportunity to practice the five most important processes of bhakti: sādhu-saṅga (association of devotees), nāma-saṅkīrtana (chanting the Holy Name), bhāgavata-śravaṇa (hearing about the Lord), mathurā-vāsa (residing in Mathurā) and śraddhāye-śrī-mūrti-sevā (worship of the Deities with faith and affection). Of all these processes, harināma-saṅkīrtana is the best, and although we have also performed saṅkīrtana, the dirt of my inner self has not been removed. I know that my heart is full of the

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tendency for enjoyment and to accept whatever is unfavourable to the Supreme Lord (*bhagavad-itar-pravṛtti*). One can know the cause for something by seeing the results. All *sādhus* say that one gets liberation from this world by performing *parikramā*. One's tendency for sensual enjoyment vanishes and one gets love and affection for the Supreme Lord. But my love and affection for this world have increased and my material worries have increased. I have done so much *sādhū-saṅga*, followed the *sādhus*, and performed *saṅkīrtana*. Why have I not got the benefit of performing *parikramā*?

Once in Jalandhar, one *mātājī* asked a similar question to our Guru Mahārāja. "I have been coming to the temple for the past fifty years and performing circumambulation of the temple. I have also been hearing *hari-kathā* from *sādhus*. I have been doing this for the past fifty years; yet if I look inside, I have fallen more. My affection for the world has increased. Why?"

I also have the same question. I am saying this for myself. I have full confidence that our Gurudeva, Paramgurudeva, and Mahāprabhuji never deceive us. Vaiṣṇavas never speak falsehoods. When a *sādhū* speaks falsely, he is not to be considered a *sādhū*. A *sādhū* is never a cheater; he cannot cheat anybody. Whatever he says is for our benefit.

So why are we not getting benefited? Mahāprabhu teaches us. Mahāprabhu's associates teach us. There cannot be any cheating in their instructions. We have seen the face of our Gurudeva externally. He does not look like a cheater. We have heard that just by going close to him, one's head would bow down by itself. Many people used to come to our Paramgurudeva with the thought that they would argue with him on the scriptures and defeat him in argument. But nobody was able to speak after coming in front of him. Such was his divine aura that heads used to bow down by themselves. His

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words cannot be false. So it is correct that it is beneficial to do Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*. Worldly attachments will be destroyed and devotion will increase. But why is the opposite effect happening?

In my opinion, the reason is that we are not doing it as it should be done. Surrender (*śaraṇāgati*) is necessary for devotional practice. Three things are required: the *Bhāgavatam* says that one should hear and perform *saṅkīrtana* about Cakrapāṇi Śrī Kṛṣṇa (Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the holder of the disc weapon); hear the divine pastimes of the Lord's birth and other activities; and perform *kīrtana* of the Lord's Name, which reveals the pastimes of the Lord, while remaining free from attachments and bad association. When we truly do this, we will get eternal peace. *Bhakti*, detachment, and knowledge of the Supreme Lord all come together. This can be explained by one example. Suppose I can eat one kg. If I eat $\frac{1}{4}$ kg, $\frac{1}{4}$ of my hunger will be relieved, and I will get satisfaction and nourishment in similar proportion. If I eat halfway, I will be half satisfied; if I eat $\frac{3}{4}$ kg, I will be $\frac{3}{4}$ satisfied. When we eat fully, our hunger will be fully relieved and we will get full satisfaction and nourishment. With every morsel that we eat, we experience relief from hunger, satisfaction, and nourishment in the same proportion.

Along with *bhakti*, a *śaraṇāgata-bhakta* (surrendered devotee) will get God realisation and detachment or reduction in attachment to this world. He will lose interest in whatever is not favourable to Kṛṣṇa; he will get *vairāgya*, complete detachment. All three will come. We performed Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*, engaged in *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* and did everything, but still we have not got attachment to Bhagavān. Then we should understand that we are lacking in surrender to the Supreme Lord. Whatever *bhakti* a surrendered soul does, he gets equal detachment from the things that are unfavourable to the Supreme Lord. If my attachment to this material world

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is increasing, then I should understand that there is some fault in my surrender. First of all, I am not performing enough *bhajana*, and whatever little I am doing is not according to the prescribed rules. Therefore, I am not getting the desired result. The scriptures are not giving false information; Śrīla Vedavyāsa is not deceiving us. There is a deficiency in our conduct; the fault is in our practice.

There are six symptoms of *śaraṇāgati*:

1. *Ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ*: Accepting whatever is favourable to Bhagavān. But we do not accept favourable things all the time. Definitely, this is our fault.
2. *Prātikūlyasya varjanam*: Rejecting whatever is unfavourable. We do not reject whatever is unfavourable to Bhagavān. When surrender becomes pure, then *bhakti* will come, God realisation will come, and detachment from unfavourable things will come. Scriptural statements cannot be false.
3. *Rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāsa*: Only the Lord can rescue me from all external problems (such as difficulty or hardship) and internal problems (such as lust, anger, greed, illusion, malice, etc.)—but I do not have this faith. That is my mistake or fault.
4. *Goptṛtve varaṇam*: I have not accepted the Supreme Lord as the maintainer in the fullest sense. My bodily needs, mental needs, and spiritual needs are being satisfied by the Supreme Lord only and no one else. I do not have faith in the Supreme Lord and have not accepted Him as the only maintainer.
5. *Kārpaṇye*: I am proud of my birth, wealth, education,

etc. Therefore, I am lacking in humility.

6. *Ātma-nikṣepa*: Self-surrender. “I do not belong to this world. I belong to the Supreme Lord”—I am lacking in this consciousness. I am committing mistakes in *śaraṇāgati*. This is one of my faults.

We do not have any interest in serving Śrī Vighraha (the Deities of the Supreme Lord) and commit offences to Them. We externally claim to have taken shelter at the feet of *sad-guru* and *śuddha-bhakta* but do not have faith in the Deities manifested by the *śuddha-bhakta*, the object of worship of the *śuddha-bhakta*. Therefore, we do not have faith in honouring *prasāda* but instead possess “rice and dahl” mentality in honouring *prasāda*. By honouring *prasāda*, attachment to the material world is destroyed. However, even after so much *prasāda-sevā*, why have the worldly attachments not been destroyed? Are the scriptures false?

*mahā-prasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
sv-alpa-puṇya-vatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate
(Mahābhārata)*

“One who possesses a limited amount of pious deeds does not see the Lord’s remnants as *mahā-prasāda* and does not see the Deities of Govinda as the Supreme Lord Himself.” The mentality that “this is a metal deity” or “this is a stone deity” remains. If the president of India were to come here, what would happen? Everyone would start welcoming him and honouring him out of fear. But the grandfather of the grandfather of the grandfather of the president, the master of the uncountable universes is present here; do we have this realisation about Him? This is also a fault. Vedavyāsa Muni describes that it is an offence to view the Deities as stone or idols. Our heart becomes impure by this. Whatever is being offered to the Deities should not be considered as simply dahl,

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rice, and vegetables. It is said that by honouring *prasāda*, one can get full control over the senses.

(bhāi-re) śarīra avidyā-jāl, joḍendriya tāhe kāl
jīve phele viṣaya-sāgore
tā'ra madhye jihvā ati-, lobhamoy sudurmati
tā'ke jetā kaṭhina saṁsāre
kṛṣṇa baro doyāmoy, koribāre jihvā jay
sva-prasād-anna dilo bhāi
sei annāmṛta pāo, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāo
preme ḍāko caitanya-nitāi
(Prasād-Sevāya, Song 1, Gītāvali)

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given the essence of the scriptures. Has he written something false? Do we have a proper understanding of *prasāda* as the remnants of the Supreme Lord? We do not see the Deities as non-different from the Supreme Lord Himself, so what can we understand about *prasāda*? We will leave the *prasāda*. I have heard about our Gurudeva that before coming to the *maṭha*, he used to eat only once a day, and that too only boiled vegetables. He performed many austerities in the Himalayas and remained without food for three days. But after taking shelter of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, he started taking *prasāda*. While we were living with Guru Mahārāja, we did not see him taking anything other than *prasāda*. Occasionally, when he was ill, if we tried to give him something after consulting with the doctor, he would say, “No! Taking only *prasāda* is good; otherwise, my disciples will also imitate me.” We used to say, “We shall cook something separately for you and give it to you in the morning. Otherwise you may fall ill.” However, Gurudeva always refused, lest everybody else start doing the same. By practicing oneself, one teaches others. Gurudeva did this by taking all the trouble himself. He used to say, “Never mind, it may be 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock; I will take the *prasāda* whenever it comes from the temple.” Why did he do this? His Gurudeva

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established the Deities. They are the Supreme Lord. By honouring Their remnants, all troubles will be over. That was his philosophy.

Whatever a Vaiṣṇava gives is also *prasāda*. I am seeing that I lack all these qualities; therefore, all the unwanted things are coming. I do not have proper intelligence to see Śrī Vighraha as non-different from the Supreme Lord Himself. There must be some reason for this. The worst is this tongue. It is most difficult to control the tongue. Of all the senses, the tongue is the most voracious. Whoever can control the tongue can control everything. Whoever cannot control the tongue cannot control the senses. What is the meaning of getting control over the tongue? Does it mean to remain without eating? If that were so, our Guru Mahārāja would have performed many austerities. Why did he start honouring *prasāda* after leaving his *tapasyā* (austerities)? If we honour *prasāda* with proper respect, our non-eternal propensities will go away. It is very difficult to control the tongue. By not eating, eating only once a day, eating vegetables or living on air, one will not be able to remove the lasciviousness of the tongue.

Not eating one day causes overeating the next day in similar proportion. We eat more on Dvādaśī day after not eating on Ekādaśī. The tendency to eat does not go away. Our previous ācārya Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has given us the remedy that by honouring *prasāda* one can get control over the tongue. If you want to control the tongue, honour *prasāda*: the remnants of food which have been offered to the Lord. Our tendency to revolt against the Supreme Lord will vanish by honouring *prasāda*.

Why am I not accepting the things that are favourable to devotional service? Why do I not give proper respect to *bhagavat-prasāda*? We have to analyse this. Gurudeva and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura are not speaking falsely. What am I lacking inside? We have to look closely. Honour the Lord's

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prasāda. Such a simple path to follow. Take the remnants of the Lord. All your propensities to revolt against the Supreme Lord will vanish.

Furthermore, viewing the Lord's Deity as stone and considering Śrī Guru to be an ordinary human being are the two biggest mistakes. That is why we find faults in Gurudeva. One will go to hell by considering Śrī Guru to be an ordinary human being. I must have this fault. I must have committed some offence against Gurudeva. Otherwise, why am I not getting the result even after doing so much service? The reasons are because of considering Gurudeva to be human and also considering a Vaiṣṇava as belonging to a particular caste. What family does the Vaiṣṇava belong to? Is he a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *śūdra*, or *caṇḍāla* (outcaste)? A Vaiṣṇava is pure regardless of whatever family he takes birth in. Haridāsa Ṭhākura took birth in a Muslim family. Seeing the Vaiṣṇava on the basis of caste pollutes our heart; we have to go to hell for that. A Vaiṣṇava is dear to the Supreme Lord. He can take birth in any family. The pure devotee is always *nirguṇa* (transcendental) irrespective of the family of his birth. I am telling you about the true devotee, not the pretender devotee. We might possess this fault in us which is preventing the cleansing of our heart.

We should not see the water of Viṣṇupadī Gaṅgā and Yamunā as ordinary water. Similarly, the water that has been used to wash the Vaiṣṇava's feet is not ordinary water. Ordinary water only cleans the dirt of the body, but the water that has washed the feet of a Vaiṣṇava destroys the ill effects of Kali-yuga. The water that has washed the Lotus Feet of Lord Viṣṇu destroys the ill effects of Kali-yuga. Yamunā water is not ordinary water. It destroys the ill effects of Kali-yuga and gives *bhakti*. By considering the water of Gaṅgā or Yamunā to be ordinary water, one goes to hell. The foot-wash water and the dust of the feet of devotees are the strength of devotional

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practice. They give the benediction of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Our Gurudeva, by his causeless mercy on us, established the Deities of the Supreme Lord here. The *prasāda* of the Lord, after being honoured by a Vaiṣṇava, becomes *mahā-mahā-prasāda*. One should not leave such *prasāda*. Otherwise we will always consider the Deities to be stone and *prasāda* to be rice, dal, etc. This is not good. Thus, our Gurudeva conducted himself and performed his devotional practice with great care because we are the followers of exemplary acts. Whoever we see as the best, we follow.

Śrī Bhagavān and His Name can destroy all the ill effects of Kali-yuga and give us love of Godhead. One should not consider such Names to be ordinary words. What will happen by doing so? By considering the mundane names of this world to be equal to the Name of the Supreme Lord and considering the Lord's Name to be ordinary, one goes to hell. Why is our heart not getting cleansed of dirt? There is a reason for this. There must be some fault; we will have to remove it.

Considering the demigods to be equal to or independent of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa causes one to attain hell. The Supreme Lord is complete; therefore He is One. The Supreme Lord cannot be three, four, or thousands, but He may have infinite pastimes. All demigods are under Him; Brahmā, Rudra and others are all His devotees and subordinates. One who considers Brahmā, Rudra and other demigods to be equal to Nārāyaṇa is an atheist. This is the opinion of the scriptures. We have got such false ideas and that is the reason we are not able to get any benefit even after doing so much.

There is no *śaraṇāgati*. Offences are being committed at the feet of Guru, Vaiṣṇava and the Holy Name. It is the most horrible offence to criticise the Name, Guru and Vaiṣṇava. One will not achieve the Supreme Lord by chanting the Holy

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Name if he is criticising *sādhus* and *guru*. He will go to hell. Even while chanting the Holy Name, one will go to hell. A small amount of *nāma-aparādha* (offence to the Holy Name) gives the boons of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. If we are not careful about this, our heart will remain polluted by all of these offences.

Here I have done my self-examination. So many days have been spent doing *parikramā*, following Vaiṣṇavas, and loudly chanting the Lord's Name. You might be thinking that I am doing a lot of *kīrtana* and dancing. But what is the result? The heart is still as polluted as before. Certainly there is a lack of *śaraṇāgati*. There is some fault in my surrender, and *nāma-aparādha* is being committed. *Dhāma-aparādha* (offence to the holy place) is being committed; that is why we are not getting the desired results. Therefore, in this holy *dhāma*, to bestow mercy on us, our Gurudeva, who is the dearest of the Supreme Lord, gave us shelter and installed his object of worship at different places for our eternal benefit. Gurudeva is always present here. Just as the Lord is eternally present everywhere, His manifestation of Gurudeva is also eternally present. Therefore, we pray at the lotus feet of Gurudeva. I am in such a miserable condition. How can we be saved from committing offences? Pure *śaraṇāgati* can only be achieved by the mercy of the Vaiṣṇava. If we don't have faith in the Vaiṣṇava, all our deeds are useless. How will we get spiritual benefit (*paramārtha*) by which we may get faith in the Vaiṣṇava? I want to stay under the guidance of the Vaiṣṇava for the remaining days of my life. I want to remove all of my *anarthas* (defects) by devotional practice. This is my prayer at the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva. Our *śikṣā-guru* Param Pūjyapāda Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja is present here. He feels compassion for us; that is why he comes here after taking so much trouble. How much affection he has! He thinks, "Because their Gurudeva is not present, if I don't go to the *parikramā* then they will be discouraged." So he comes and gives his blessings.

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Although he already has affection for me, I pray to him to give me mercy and to remove all the bad desires from my heart. You are all sincere; that is why you have come here. You have come to the *dhāma* because you have got the mercy of *guru* and Bhagavān. You all please bless me; then I will get spiritual benefit.

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

About The Author

His Divine Grace Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaja appeared in 1924 in Assam, India, on Rama-Navami, the most auspicious appearance day of the Supreme Lord Krishna in His form as Ramachandra. Having been brought up in a pious environment, he developed a strong inclination to search for the ultimate goal of life, which led him to take up the study of philosophy at Calcutta University.

While studying at the university, he came in contact with his spiritual master, His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj, and immediately became attracted by his transcendently powerful personality. After completing his Masters Degree in Philosophy in 1947, Srila Tirtha Maharaja wholeheartedly and unreservedly dedicated his life to the service of his spiritual master.

His service attitude was so exemplary that soon Srila Madhava Maharaja established him as the secretary of the devotional institution known as Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Matha, which has over twenty ashramas (monasteries) in India alone. He was awarded sannyasa, the order of renunciation, in 1961. Eventually, Srila Madhava Maharaja, seeing his disciple's degree of dedication and sincerity combined with a practical mind, selected him as his worthy successor. After the disappearance of his beloved Spiritual Master Srila Madhava Goswami Maharaja in 1979, Srila Tirtha Maharaja was appointed as President-Acharya of the Math. He has received the fortunate blessings and great affection of many

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of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's prominent followers, such as Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhar Deva Goswami Maharaja, Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaja, Srila Bhakti Hridaya Van Goswami Maharaja, Srila Bhakti Akinchana Krishna Dasa Babaji Maharaja, Srila Bhakti Kumud Sant Goswami Maharaja and many others.

For the last five decades, Srila Tirtha Maharaja has been engaged in the propagation of the all-embracing doctrine of transcendental Divine Love of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to counter the present trend of violence and cruelty, and to bring about unity of hearts among all, irrespective of caste, creed or religion. "Example is better than precept" is his way of preaching. Srila Tirtha Maharaja is known for not deviating even one inch outside of the four corners of the prescripts of the Holy Scriptures. His Divine Grace is a renowned authority on Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy and he is beloved by thousands of devotees throughout the world as the very embodiment of humility and spiritual affection.

Now at the age of 82, inspired by the grace of his Gurudeva, Srila Tirtha Maharaja is always on the move, going from towns to villages in India and also abroad, propagating the divine message of the Bhagavad Gita and the Srimad Bhagavatam.

His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaja is the present President-Acharya of the Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math devotional institution and the Founder-of GOKUL (Global Organisation of Krishnachaitanya's Universal Love). He also serves as president of the World Vaishnava Association (WVA).

His Divine Grace has authored numerous articles and books in several Indian languages as well as English. To date,

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his books in English include Suddha Bhakti, Sages of Ancient India, A Taste of Transcendence, Dasavatara, Sri Chaitanya: His Life and Associates, The Holy life of Srila B.D. Madhava Goswami Maharaj, Guru Tattva, Affectionately yours Hari Katha and Vaishnava Aparadha, Sri Archana Paddhati; and the present book, Nectar of Hari Katha.